

Strategic Directions for Information Technology

in Washington State Government

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Introduction

The Department of Information Services (DIS) began operation July 1, 1987. Later that year an advisory group of agency and DIS information processing managers convened to formulate a statement of strategic directions. The resulting Strategic Directions for Information Technology (IT) was subsequently adopted by the Washington State Information Services Board (ISB) in May 1988.

This document describes Washington State's adopted strategic directions for acquiring, managing, and using IT. Information technology includes the equipment, software, services, and products used for information processing, automation, and telecommunications.

A description of major state goals, principles, and framework has also been included to provide an overall context for the IT strategic directions.

Within that context, the IT vision describes a future target for state service delivery supported by IT. The planning horizon for this technology vision is into the 21st century.

The IT strategic directions are presented in the next four sections:

- ◆ management
- ◆ data resources
- ◆ technology infrastructure
- ◆ and human resources

These four sections describe IT operating principles and strategic goals. The strategic goals are statements of conditions planned for achievement in the next seven years.

DIS would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of the many individuals who enthusiastically supported this project. The agency advisory group and a body of 11 senior state information processing managers deserve special recognition for their dedicated work.

Executive Overview

The strategic directions for IT includes a vision of the future contribution IT to Washington State government, a set of principles for the use of IT, and strategic goals which will move the state toward the vision over the next seven years.

Vision of the Future

The effective management and application of IT will significantly improve the:

- ◆ quality of service delivery to Washington State citizens
- ◆ state workforce productivity
- ◆ overall cost effectiveness of state operations

This vision will thereby significantly increase the state's capability to attain its major goals.

Management Principle

The management of IT, like the management of other key resources such as personnel and finance, is a fundamental management responsibility.

Strategic Goals:

Only when information services strategic and tactical plans are closely integrated with agency strategic plans will the use of IT meet management expectations. The first two goals are to increase executive level management participation in planning for IT, and to increase the participation of information processing management in agency strategic and tactical business planning.

Agencies are dependent on IT for day-to-day operation and, most importantly, for the implementation of new initiatives to enhance service to the public. The third goal is to improve the successful implementation of major technology projects.

Data Resource Principle

All data collected, generated, and used by the state is considered a state resource.

Strategic Goals:

We must give as much attention to the management of our information resources as we do to the management of our fiscal resources and our personnel resources. The fourth goal is to develop agency and state-level, information resource management programs which identify the responsibility for this key resource and leverage the use of information resource for the benefit of the state and agency.

The value, effectiveness, and efficient use of information increases when information is shared. The fifth goal is to increase the intra-agency and inter-agency sharing of information.

Technology Infrastructure Principle

The state computer and telecommunication systems are capable of supporting the interconnections and linkages among state agencies and with the citizens and businesses of the state.

Strategic Goals:

To effectively and efficiently manage information, provide a base for application processing, and increase resource sharing. The sixth goal is to migrate to an integrated state computing architecture.

State Goals

Strategy

The Governor has identified children as our state's number one priority. He has also adopted three major goals critical to the future of the state:

- ◆ quality education
- ◆ a clean, safe environment
- ◆ economic opportunity for all Washington citizens

In addition, each government entity, whether in the executive, judicial, or legislative branch, sets strategic organizational goals.

Tactical

For each major goal that is set, tactical decisions need to be made. An example is the decision to support implementation of the state's Family Independence Program in support of the state goal of economic opportunity for all Washington citizens.

In addition, a variety of tactical level opportunities and problems continually arise. Examples include mitigation of the impact of a drought, convincing the developers of a major new production facility to locate in Washington, dealing with the closure of a large plant, developing a state strategy for aquaculture, etc.

Operational

Operational-level decisions are required to implement solutions to tactical-level issues. They are also required in each branch of government to implement basic mandated changes on a day-to-day basis.

At all three planning levels (strategic, tactical, and operational) it is critical that the best decisions are made, all the right people are involved, all pertinent facts are considered, and that decisions are made as quickly and effectively as possible.

State Operating Principles

Partnership

Cooperative, working partnerships must be developed among agencies with individual constituents and citizens groups, local government entities, businesses, the federal government, and our foreign trade partners.

Decision Making

Decisions should be based on complete, accurate, and up-to-date information and made in a timely manner. Information should be provided to decision makers in a format and at a level of detail that facilitates their understanding of trends, relationships to related issues, and the projected impact of their decision.

Effectiveness

Services must be delivered in an effective manner; those who use state services should view them as satisfactorily meeting their needs, streamlined, easy to access, and responsive.

Efficiency

State employees should use tools, processes, and management techniques that ensure efficiency of operation and productivity.

State Framework

General

The state of Washington has a number of centralized, shared support systems, and functions that all agencies use for their mutual benefit. These include personnel, finance, budgeting, retirement, and insurance systems and processes.

There is also increasing support for the development of a number of additional shared systems and processes, such as statewide electronic and voice mail, legislative information and tracking systems, an automated fiscal note process, and a statewide policy-level database.

Agency Specific

In general, agency directors have full responsibility and authority for those duties, functions, statutes, and rules are agency specific. Each director is expected to set a strategic direction that ensures the effective and efficient implementation of his or her legislative mandate.

Inter-agency

There is another essential expectation of agency directors: the agency-specific strategic direction that is set must allow for and facilitate the development of effective and efficient partnerships between agencies to work on important issues as they arise. This means agencies must be ready, willing, and able to collaborate on any strategic, tactical, or operational issue with any and all other agencies that have a shared responsibility for the issue in question.

Many factors contribute to the development of effective inter-agency working partnerships. One key factor; however, is a consistent statewide direction for managing information and implementation technology.

Information Technology Vision

The effective management and application of IT will significantly improve the:

- ◆ quality of service delivery to citizens of the state
- ◆ productivity of the state workforce
- ◆ overall cost effectiveness of state operations

This vision, thereby significantly increasing the state's capability to attain its major goals.

Information Technology Strategic Directions

Management Principle

Information technology like other important resources such as personnel and budget, is a fundamental management responsibility. Each agency is responsible for the management of information technology resources necessary to carry out the mission of the agency consistent with the overall state strategic direction.

Strategic Goal 1:

Sustain executive involvement in information technology planning to ensure the successful implementation of information technology that meets strategic agency needs by:

- ◆ increasing the active involvement of agency directors in information resource planning and implementation, and
- ◆ integrating agency information resource planning with agency program planning and budgeting, and the state budget process.

Strategic Goal 2:

Include information processing management in agency strategic and tactical planning to assure that managers of information technology fully understand and support agency business needs by:

- ◆ increasing the active involvement of agency information processing managers in the agency planning process.

Strategic Goal 3:

Successfully implement information technology projects that support agency goals, improve the efficiency of agency operations, improve service delivery, meet legislative mandate, or are mandated by regulatory or control agencies; through:

- ◆ improved project planning and review processes,
- ◆ improved project management skills and capabilities, and
- ◆ quality technical staff resources and tools for systems development.

Data Resources Principle

All data collected, generated, and used by state agencies is managed as a resource of the state. Agencies administer data in a coordinated manner, and share data across organizational lines meeting program needs, within appropriate levels of security and privacy.

Strategic Goal 4:

Manage information as an asset and a strategic resource of the state and each agency, through:

- ◆ increased agency recognition on the value of information,
- ◆ state and agency-level information resource management planning, and
- ◆ an appropriate state data dictionary framework.

Strategic Goal 5:

Efficiently achieve agency and inter-agency data when and where it is needed to support service deliver, through:

- ◆ increased agency awareness of information sharing opportunities,
- ◆ coordinated information processing and telecommunications technical environments, and
- ◆ accessible and easily used information management tools.

Technology Infrastructure Principle

Technology is a means not an end. The information technology architecture is capable of supporting necessary interconnections and linkages among state agencies, between government and other entities, and with the citizens and businesses of the state.

Strategic Goal 6:

Develop and migrate to a state information technology architecture that integrates workstations, computer systems, networks, and other information technologies into a single infrastructure to:

- ◆ provide efficient interconnection and data sharing
- ◆ provide a single image view to the user
- ◆ meet state workforce needs for service delivery
- ◆ provide any point to any point communications
- ◆ facilitate inter-agency sharing of skills, facilities, and resources

Strategic Goal 7:

Implement an integrated state network service that is flexible, reliable, responsive, efficient, and cost effective, and that:

- ◆ provides full network management capabilities
- ◆ supports the concept of universal workstations
- ◆ can add new services without disrupting existing services
- ◆ meets state workforce needs for service delivery
- ◆ supports data, voice, image, and other information forms

Strategic Goal 8:

Maintain an information technology products and services acquisition strategy consistent with state strategic directions by implementing an improved acquisition process that:

- ◆ will meet the needs of the agencies
- ◆ takes advantage of the state's buying power
- ◆ promotes open and fair opportunities to qualified products/service providers
- ◆ is responsive to the needs of inter-agency initiatives

Human Resources Principle

The state government workforce has the appropriate tools and information to extend its capabilities for effectively and efficiently delivering services to state citizens.

Strategic Goal 9:

Provide the workforce with the training, technology, and information it needs to do its job more effectively by:

- ◆ providing IT training programs consistent with the state strategic directions
- ◆ improved quality, availability, and presentation of information
- ◆ providing networked workstations for state "knowledge workers"

Strategic Goal 10:

Enhance the quality of the information processing professional staff to benefit the state and the clients it serves by:

- ◆ developing a uniform staff development policy
- ◆ improving the information processing personnel classification structure and certification process
- strengthening the service orientation of information services organizations and their employees